

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1909

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BC, RH
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNALIST VIEWS RHODESIAN SCENE

REF: PRETORIA 4007

1. EDITOR OF ARGUS AFRICAN NEWS SERVICE (JOHANNESBURG),
W.H. NUSSEY, CALLED ON EMBOFF AUGUST 15. REFLECTING ON HIS
RECENT VISIT TO RHODESIA IN LATE JULY, NUSSEY SAID HE WAS
STRUCK FOR FIRST TIME BY GENERAL WHITE ACCEPTANCE OF INEVI-
TABILITY OF MAJORITY RULE. NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS WERE EX-ZAMBIANS
WHO SWORE THEY WOULD NOT LIVE UNDER A "GOVERNMENT WITH A SINGLE
BLACK FACE IN IT". WHITE MAJORITY WOULD SUPPORT SMITH IN
AUGUST 31ST GENERAL ELECTION BECAUSE OF FEAR OF CHANGING
HORSES IN MIDSTREAM AND BECAUSE OPPOSITION RHODESIAN ACTION
PARTY LACKED STRONG CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP.

2. NUSSEY INTERVIEWED SMITH WHO RAMBLED ON WITHOUT
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ADDRESSING THE QUESTIONS ASKED. ACCORDING TO NUSSEY,
SMITH IS A SICK MAN; HE LOOKS HAGGARD AND HIS CLOTHES,
ESPECIALLY AROUND THE COLLAR, APPEAR TOO LARGE. ONLY
POINT OF INTEREST TO EMERGE IN INTERVIEW WAS THAT UN-
ARMED BLACK NATIONALIST FIGHTERS COULD RETURN TO PARTI-
CIPATE IN A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT FEAR OF GOVERNMENT PROS-
ECUTION. (HERE NUSSEY ADDED THAT THOUSANDS OF FIGHTERS

HAD ALREADY RETURNED TO RHODESIA AFTER FIRST BURYING
THEIR WEAPONS.)

3. NUSSEY STATED THAT THE ARMY WAS THE SINGLE MOST
POWERFUL BLOC OF OPINION IN RHODESIA, ONE WHICH CLEARLY
ACCEPTED MAJORITY RULE AND HAD PRESSURED THE GOVERNMENT
IN THAT DIRECTION. NEVERTHELESS, THE ARMY LEADERSHIP,
INCLUDING GENERAL WALL, ABSOLUTELY RULED OUT ANY FUTURE
INTEGRATION WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ARMY, AN IDEA SUR-
FACED RECENTLY BY NKOMO. NUSSEY REITERATED REPORT (REFTEL)
THAT WALL'S COMPLAINT WAS OF HARDLINE POLITICIANS WHO, BY
INSISTING ON PROSECUTING NATIONALISTS, BLOCKED HIS PROGRAM
OF ENCOURAGING TERRORIST SURRENDERS.

4. AS FOR BLACK NATIONALISTS, NUSSEY FELT THAT MUGABE
WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IRRELEVANT. HE AROUSED NO
ENTHUSIASM INSIDE RHODESIA AND HIS POLICIES HAD BEEN
BADLY UNDERCUT BY NKOMO'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF
MAJORITY RULE. NUSSEY SAID HE THOUGHT MUGABE WOULD
SOON "CATCH A BULLET". OVERRIDING FEAR OF BLACKS IN
RHODESIA WAS OF A ZAPU-ZANU CIVIL WAR. EXPRESSING
GENERALLY ACCEPTED VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO UNITY IN THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT, NUSSEY CONSIDERED THAT NKOMO'S BUILD
UP AND RECENT DORNING OF A GENERAL'S UNIFORM WAS IN
ANTICIPATION OF THE COMING FIGHT WITH ZANU.

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